



INNIS COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Innis Herald

ISSUE 4, VOLUME 13

MARCH 1980

HAROLD INNIS DOWN NOT OUT: *Eccles Critique Devastating and Disturbing*



Harold Innis may have been knocked down by Eccles, but he certainly has not been driven out of the minds of generations of scholars whom he has influenced and will likely continue to do so in the future.

By Roger Riendeau

Harold Adams Innis has exerted a profound influence on the writing of Canadian History. This fact seems to disturb Professor W. J. Eccles according to his article, "A Belated Review of Harold Adams Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada*." The article, published in the December, 1979 issue of the *Canadian Historical Review*, is the most devastating critique of Harold Innis that I have ever read.

My initial reaction to Professor Eccles's article was an emotional one. How dare that man attack the scholar after whom my College is named. But this reaction was soon superseded by a more objective one. What a powerful and persuasive piece of historical research and critical analysis.

Eccles, Professor of History at the University of Toronto, claims that Innis "took economic determinism to extremes and grossly exaggerated the role of the fur trade in the history of North America and Europe." Eccles then proceeds meticulously to dispel many of the "myths" perpetuated by Innis's monumental book, published a half century ago.

Innisian Myths

Innis argued that the profit to be made from the fur trade was the primary reason why France maintained a colony along the St. Lawrence River between the early 17th and 18th centuries. But according to Eccles, the fur trade was consistently an economic liability rather than a benefit to France. Instead, the fur trade was an "economic weapon", that is, it facilitated military alliances with the various Indian nations who would, in turn, fight on the side of the French in their rivalry with the English. As far as France was concerned, Canada was never more than a pawn in a great European power struggle.

Innis also maintained that the fur trade inhibited the proper economic development of New France and ultimately contributed to its conquest by the English in 1759-60. Innis stressed the inevitable clash between the fur trade and the settlement frontier, between the forest and the farm. Yet, by Innis's own admission, the Pre-Cambrian Shield was the "crucial" area of fur trade development, and it has never been suitable for agriculture. Eccles prefers to point to numerous other factors which account for the slow growth of New France and its eventual downfall: a harsh winter climate with a short growing season, the imbalance of the sexes, lack of economic diversity, distance from European markets, the mercantilist policies of France, and English military superiority. In other words, Innis offered simplistic answers to complex questions.

The tendency in Innis is also manifested in his analysis of the rivalry between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company for control over the western fur trade between the 1780's and 1821. Innis popularized the notion that the London-based enterprise triumphed over the Montreal-based firm because of its monopoly privileges granted by the Royal Charter of 1670. This gave the Hudson's Bay Company the exclusive right to operate from Hudson Bay, and therefore the advantage of a shorter route into the interior. On the other

hand, Eccles attributes its success to the advent of the York boat along with the Hudson's Bay Company's commercial and financial superiority. Innis went on to suggest that "The North West Company was the forerunner of the present Confederation." However, the connection between these St. Lawrence "pedlars" and the segment of the Montreal merchant community that was instrumental in the achievement of Canadian nationhood in 1867 is virtually non-existent.

Innis concludes *The Fur Trade in Canada* by declaring that Canada emerged as a political entity with boundaries largely determined by the fur trade. Eccles argues quite rightly that the current boundaries between Canada and the United States bear little resemblance to the southern limit of the fur trade. The fur trade extended south of the Great Lakes region well into the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys. West of the Great Lakes to the Rocky Mountains the fur trade developed north of the Saskatchewan River, never coming close to the 49th parallel of latitude. Likewise, on the west side of the Rockies the limits of the fur trade dipped as far south as the 42nd parallel.

By the time that he is through, Eccles leaves little doubt that Innis's *The Fur Trade in Canada* has numerous deficiencies. At the same time, Eccles leaves little doubt about his own proficiency on the subject, particularly as it relates to New France. Among Eccles's previous works, *The Canadian Frontier 1534-1760* and *France in America* are considered by many, including myself, as the best books on New France.

Why Undermine Innis?

After fully digesting this penetrating and provocative critique, I was left with a third and most disturbing reaction. Having revealed the basic flaws in Innis's book, why does Eccles seem intent on undermining Innis's academic reputation? Is it the duty of the scholar to point out any erroneous or misleading interpretation of a subject. But I am puzzled by Eccles's rather bold conclusion "that virtually nothing can be found on the credit side of the ledger in this instance, except that Innis's *The Fur Trade in Canada* was a pioneering work which brought the Canadian fur trade to the attention of a wide audience." Surely, Eccles is overstating his point.

In fact, from the start of his critique Eccles can be accused of setting up a "straw man." In other words, he is presenting Innis's book in a way that it can be more easily refuted. Eccles claims that Innis's book "has long been regarded as the definitive work on the subject, an impeccable piece of scholarship, and a landmark in Canadian historiography."

I learned long ago as a struggling undergraduate that Innis's work on the fur trade had been superseded by others. In particular, E. E. Rich's 3 volume history, *The Hudson's Bay Company, 1660-1870*, published in 1960, is widely regarded as a far superior treatment of the Canadian fur trade. I also learned long ago that Innis's research techniques were somewhat questionable. Eccles is not exaggerating when he says that Innis approached his work "with certain a

priori premises and conclusions already formed" and looked for evidence to support them. Moreover, Innis has never been accused of being a lucid and lively writer. So why bother to topple Innis on these grounds.

Eccles is curiously silent about the extent to which Innis's book is "a landmark in Canadian historiography." Surely, he could have found something positive to say in this regard. But I do bring to their attention the concluding chapter of the book which truly represents a turning point in the way that Canadian history has been interpreted.

A Historiographical Landmark

Prior to Innis's book there were two basic interpretations of Canadian history. One was the "imperialist" version which portrayed Canada as a "Little Britain" transplanted onto the North American continent. This interpretation, popularized in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, told a romantic story of how British political institutions and social values were incorporated into a national community still very closely tied to the Empire.

After World War I as Canada was moving toward Dominion autonomy, a new version of Canadian history emerged stressing its North American character. According to this interpretation, because the lines of geography in North America run into a north-south direction, Canada and the United States had evolved along a common political course which made them natural allies. Such a line of reasoning continued to be popular during World War II and the Cold War period.

In his concluding chapter to *The Fur Trade in Canada*, Harold Innis offered a different perspective on Canada's past development. He presented the fur trade as one of the first in a series of European sponsored enterprises which evolved in an east-west direction, at once transatlantic and transcontinental. In the pursuit of the profits of the fur trade, French and British explorers and entrepreneurs moved via the St. Lawrence River and Hudson Bay to the Pacific and Arctic Oceans. Thus, the fur traders "established the course of later economic development in Canada which would be reinforced by the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the late 19th century. It too was a product of British enterprise and capital.

Innis followed his study of the fur trade with an examination of the cod fisheries and the forest frontier, the latter of which opened the way for his later studies in communication theory. The Innisian approach was taken up by Donald Creighton whose book *The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence* (published in 1937) is a classic in Canadian historical writing.

The Significance of Innis

The significance of Innis's work is twofold. First, it countered a prevailing view that Canada was a nation artificially created by political means in defiance of the natural lines of geography in North America. "The present Dominion," proclaimed Innis, "emerged not in spite of geography but because of it." By implications Canada was not a mere political adjunct of the United States but a distinct

Directory



To the men and women who staff the Innis College library, the independent college libraries, and the central installations at Roberts and Sigmund Samuel, our thanks.

The
Formal
Page 2

Our Thanks
Page 3

Athletic
Banquet
Page 4

Continued on Page 2



Innis Gives Bash To Beat The Band

By Michael Swan

Guy de Rothschild was not there! Princess Jasmin Kahn, (Rita Hayworth's daughter) was not there! Princess Ira Von Furstenberg was not there! Margaret Trudeau wanted to come, but nobody would sell her a ticket! But just about everybody else of any importance at all was there. In fact for the first time ever the Innis College Informal Formal was sold out. One hundred and twenty tickets were sold and at least that number gathered in the Pearson room of the downtown Ramada Inn.

The evening began with drinking and talking, then there was drinking and eating, later on there was drinking and dancing, and finally we all moved up stairs to a party suite where there was drinking and drinking. In the last dance of the night Joe Brandau along with several other young blades tested the strength of the Ramada Inn's tables and found them satisfactory.

It was a chance for Innis people to show their flair for dress. By far, the most spectacular outfit was the mid-Victorian tuxedo worn by our principal Dennis Duffy. Said Dennis, "Actually, I look like a waiter, and I'm hoping that, maybe, a little later on in the evening, I can pick up a few tips." Dennis has not said how much he cleared on the evening. Kirk Roberts was notable for his interpretation of "semi-formal". Clothed partially in formal garb and partially in something he stole from a drunk on Queen Street, he dazzled us all on the dance floor.

It was also a big night for Innis talent. Here again our principal Dennis Duffy along with Chris Taylor, figures highly. During one of the band's breaks Dennis gave a complete rendition of "Barbra Anne". Many marvelled at this total recall until they noticed that he was singing the same verse over and over again. Later on in the evening we were treated to some fine music from

Jeff Hutchings. Jeff took command of the piano during the band's second break for "The Piano Man" and "Alberta Bound."

Party Lights was the perfect band for the affair which is probably why this was their second year performing for the Innis Informal Formal. It would probably be a good idea to have them back next year. Nothing succeeds like success.

Time was taken early in the evening to honour some worthy people of Innis. Dennis Duffy received a lovely top hat that matched his tuxedo. His lovely lady Mrs. Duffy received a corsage as did Kathleen Crook to honour her I.C.S.S. presidency and Debbie Dennis for her efforts organizing the formal.

The food was tremendous, the wine was mediocre, the band was great, the party left us dazed. What more can we say but to thank Debbie Dennis once again for organizing the whole affair.



Innis Down . . .

Continued from Page 1

national entity with its own economic direction which in turn fostered the growth of its own political institutions Innis recognized the dangers of being too closely entwined with the Amer-

ican economy long before it became fashionable to do so in the 1960's.

Second, Innis helped to liberate Canadian history from its obsession with Imperialist romanticism and nationalist politics. Innis was not preoccupied with great men performing noble deeds for the glory of the motherland. His heroes were basically greedy men in search of wealth and who in the process uncovered and exploited the natural resources upon which the survival of Canada has always depended.

It is this economic determinism which bothers Eccles, and justifiably so, Canada is much more than just an economic creation, and it is scholars

like Eccles with a somewhat broader vision of Canada's past who have contributed to a more complete portrait. But a critique is supposed to judge a work on its own terms, particularly in the context of the time and circumstance in which it was written. Innis was a political economist trying to redress the imbalance in the way that historians over a half century ago related Canada's heritage. Even so, few works written so long ago could withstand the kind of scrutiny to which Eccles subjects Innis's book.

So, it is not the substance of Eccles's critique that I find objectionable but rather its tone. I liken it to a champion

prize fighter who scores a one round knockout over an aging ex-champion and relishes the feat. Indeed, Harold Innis may have been knocked down by Eccles, but he certainly has not been driven out of the minds of generations of scholars whom he has influenced and will likely continue to do so in the future.



INNIS COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

EDITOR.....MICHAEL CLARKE
ASSOCIATE EDITOR.....LAWRENCE EARLIX
COPY MANAGER.....JEAN DAWSON
STAFF WRITER.....MIKE SWAN
PHOTOGRAPHY.....TREVOR BYRNE, JOHN GILHAM
ADVERTISING.....SANDY TSE

The Innis Herald is published monthly by the Innis College Students Society and is printed by Metrospan Printing and Publishing. Opinions expressed in this newspaper, are not necessarily those of the Innis College Students Society or the college administration. Formal complaints about the editorial or business operation of the paper may be addressed to The Editor, Innis Herald, Innis College, 2 Sussex Ave., Toronto, Ontario.

The greatest companion to the work of the reporter is, honest editing. A copy editor's pencil or cursor should be used cautiously and precisely, used to refine but not control. When changes of meaning or fact are required in copy they should be made openly with the full co-operation of the writer. An editor, however well informed, cannot substitute his own version of a given set of facts that of the man on the scene, who saw and heard what was going on, without the most compelling grounds for doing so. This can be as important in small matters as it is in large.

E.C. Phelan



INNIS COLLEGE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, 2 SUSSEX AVENUE, TORONTO, 978-7023

Dear Editor,

I was distressed to read that you're having problems getting people to give of themselves. What you're producing is, in my estimation, the best college paper on the St. George campus. I know people are incredibly lazy and apathetic these years but don't give up in sheer frustration yet.

Hamish Wilson
Trinity



"Real good middle-management crop this year, Harold. . .
I see no reason we can't put the south forty in
Assistant Vice-Presidents come spring. . ."

Early to bed and early to rise, Leaves me with circles under my eyes

By Cindy Turkis

It has come to my attention
that there are two types of people in
the world today.
People who get up at the crack of
dawn,
And people who feel no
compunction
about sleeping their lives away.

And those who get up with the sun
are able to do one hundred sit-ups
and fifty push-ups
and run around the block three
times
before breakfasting on grapefruit and
bran,

While those who sleep in until the
last minute
find themselves drinking cold coffee
on a crowded subway or tram.

And the people who get up early
tend to sneer at the people who get
up late;
And I think it's time that I added my
voice
to this debate.

Because when I glance at the clock
and roll over in bed for the fourth
time
I think to myself that there's one
thing that can't be beaten:

The early bird may get the worm,
But the early worm gets eaten.

"PSSST!"

By Cindy Turkis

I hear some things I can't believe,
and some that I accept.
All told to me in confidence,
these secrets I have kept.
Some were quite revealing,
and some of no import;
Some were classed as major crimes,
and some were less than torts.

No matter where I've heard them,
No matter what their gist,
I never would repeat them,
I just add them to my list.
A hastily scribbled letter
or a whisper in my ear,
and I learn of things that people
would want no-one else to hear.

Friends come and drop their burdens,
Lay their troubles at my feet;
And I listen very carefully,
promising to be discreet.
But as soon as I've heard what was
said,
or read what had been written;
I know I'll keep those secrets safe,
'Cause pretty soon, I'll forget 'em.

So when somebody tells you
that your secret's safe with me;
I ask you to remember
how that rumour came to be;
No, I won't pass your confidence on
and make you live to regret it;
Because I've forgotten what you said
The moment after you said it.

Thank You!



On behalf of Larry Earlix and myself I would like to thank the staff and students of Innis College for helping make the paper what it is.

Michael Clark, Ed.

Larry Earlix
Jean Dawson
Mike Swan
Trevor Byrne
John Gilham
Adam Socha
Sandy Tse
Dennis Duffy
Peter Allen
Arthur Wood
Anthony Haasz
Cindy Turkis
Peter Sutherland
Anita Bredouskis
Suzanne Hunt
Robert Brodenick
Bill Kizowski
Uli Hahn
Sue Sparks
Tom Viavada
Janet Ward
Matthew Parfitt
F. Kenneth Hare

— Associate Editor
— Copy Manager
— Staff Writer
— Photography
— Photography
— Logo Design
— Advertising
Roddy McDonald
Kathleen Crook
Ian Camble
David Finlay
Larry Demarce
Bill Beyea
Dan Fullen
Robin Harris
Roderick Laurin
Debbie Dennis
Eli Marcus
Ken Morris
Ian Mothersdale
Dan Wallace
Gerry Snape
Roger Riendeau

MAY THE FARCE
BE WITH YOU!

To the Graduates:

Best wishes in the time ahead.
Remember us.

To those returning in the Fall:

Have a good Summer,
we'll see you next year!

To Everyone:

Drop in when you're around.

Innis College Administrative Staff: Alison, Art, Audrey, David, Dennis,
Forbes, Unda, Sheron, Sue, Susan, Sylvia.

ATHLETIC BANQUET

BIG BASH!

By Mike Swan

This year's athletic banquet marked one of Innis's most successful years in intramural sports. With a winning team in women's Squash, a near winning team in Women's basketball, and a very strong team in men's waterpolo this year was remarkable not only for the strength of its teams but for the very good rate of participation that most of the sports programs enjoyed. Sue Sparks, women's athletic representative, and Uli Hahn, men's athletic representative, are to be congratulated for a very successful year of very well organized sports.

The banquet itself was just as successful as the year in sports. There was a fine turn out of about forty Innis sports luminaries, plenty of food, wine, and general good times. Those of you who didn't come missed something. Awards were given to the most valuable players of various teams, and some of our most successful teams received team awards.

Team awards this year went out to the Innis-Law women's Basketball team, who placed second in the overall standings this year, and the women's squash team, who were this year's intramural champions. Most valuable player awards went to Bill Kizovski for soccer and squash, Mellissa O'Donahue for Women's Basketball, Rodney Martin for men's hockey, Anthea

Home for women's volleyball, Leon Churniack for men's waterpolo, Sheila O'Reilly for women's squash, Fred Ritting for men's basketball, Sue Sparks for women's hockey and touch football, Tom Viavada for men's touch football, Uli Hahn for men's volleyball and squash. Special mention was made of the success of the Vladimir House curling team.

This was the first year of a new system of awards for accumulated points that is designed to encourage participation in Innis Sports. Points are awarded for participation in any capacity in Innis sports. Among the winners in the point standings were Kathleen Crook, Anita Bredovski, Sue Sparks, Sandy Tse, Dave Finlay, Troy Bell.

The Pat McMahon trophy for participation and leadership in women's sports at Innis was won by Sue Sparks, which surprised no one. The men's athletic award, which was awarded for the first time this year, was won by Bill Kizovski.

The banquet ended a good year for Innis sports. The success of the year owes a lot to the efforts of this year's athletic representatives, Sue Sparks and Uli Hahn. All of the people who participated in sports this year wish to thank them for their outstanding effort this year. Whoever replaces them next year will have to go a long way to equal their efforts.

Innis College

I.C.S.S. PINBALL SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 1979-80

\$150

First year award:
Second year award:
Third year award:

Kirk Roberts
Sue Sparks
Anita Bredovski

I.C.S.S. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AWARDS FOR 1879-80

\$50

First year award:
Second year award:
Third year award:
Men's Athletic award:
Women's Athletic award:
Multi-faculty award:
Floating award:
Floating award:
Floating award:

Hugh Palmer
Kathleen Crook
Debbie Dennis
Uli Hahn
Sue Sparks
no recipient
Bill Kizovski
Sandy Tse
Anthea Horne
Ian Gamble

INNIS SPORTS

MEN'S INTER FAC. BASKETBALL

The first thing that most people ask about any team is: "How many games have you won?" In the case of this year's Men's Basketball team, answering this is no easy task. At the beginning of the year, there were two teams from Innis in the league, one in the 'A' flight and the other in the 'B' flight. Both were talented and both had an over abundance of spirit. Unfortunately, because of the bureaucratic jungle of the university athletics department, the 'A' team was disqualified for defaulting on their first two games, which we didn't even know about. In order to register our deep feelings of disgust at the way we had been treated, the decision was made to amalgamate the two teams and play in the 'B' league. Just to prove that we should have been in the 'B' league, we promptly beat the top two teams in our new league. Thanks to talent, spirit and the able coaching of Ken Morris, who nearly accomplished the impossible task of making us play like a team, we continued to astound the other teams in our come-from behind play off bid. If it hadn't been for a very physical Vic

team, we would have made the play offs and then we really would have shown them. Well, we will just have to do it next year.

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

The Innis Men's Volleyball Team had a good showing this year with 3 wins, and 5 losses. The team was organized and coached by Arnie Mechelsons and Uli Hahn. The team's record is good taking into account that the games were only lost by a few points and always in the last set. The fine young men on the team upgraded the performances of past years. They did not, however, make it to the play offs, possibly due to the excessive pressure which they could not handle.

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

This year's Women's Volleyball Team was a combined effort between the Innis Women and the Faculty of Music Women. Their record is hall of their games won, and half lost. All in all, a good showing by the team.

Speak to me not of pools and Gymnasias I'll have no more of Women's Slimnasia

By Cindy Turkis

I signed up with a health club to better my Physique;
And told myself I would attend at least three times a week.
I bought myself a leotard like Ballet dancers use,
and mentally prepared to fight those bulging midriff blues.

The first day that I went there was a shock, to say the least. Reminiscent of the story about Beauty and the Beast. The floor was strewn with sweatshirts laying where the class had flung them. There were fifty women in that room not an ounce of flab among them.

I tried to join the class but this was more than I could take; Was I the only one with weight to lose, for heaven's sake?
The wall was lined with mirrors my reflection made me wince; I spent an agonizing hour there and haven't been back since!

During those journeys, John would sit near the windows on the right side of the train and I on the left. Since I believed then that my heart was on the right side, it was better to keep as far away from the dusty window as possible. Every time I saw a buffalo I would twist a finger and count one, or add one to the previous one, then three, four, five. . . John would of course do the same, but his buffalo had to be on his side of the train. However, if I caught sight of a tomb on John's side, I would shout to him and he had to bury five buffaloes he had got. If he spied a tomb on my side, unfortunately, I had to bury five of my buffaloes, as well. Finally the person who had more buffaloes than the other won. The game was simple but we always had a good time, unlike Dad. The wrinkles on his forehead would double after each journey.

John and I started our game on my first trip. At that time John had already learned grade-one arithmetic and he could count to five hundred without stopping. I did not know how big five hundred was. I guessed it was about as big as my grandfather's grandfather. But I always won. Although I started slowly by using my fingers and toes, I never failed to catch up with John and get ahead of him after I had got my initial twenty buffaloes. Twenty one, twenty two, twenty four, twenty five, twenty nine. . . Sometimes John would miss one or two tombs on my side, but I seldom missed tombs on his side. My eyes were better than his then.

Usually each of us would get about

BUFFALO COUNTING

By Yao Ershing

Yao Ershing is an exchange student from Peking who has learned most of his English during his last two years at the University of Toronto.

I was only four years old when Dad began to take me and my brother John to our family's graveyard to visit our grandfather and his father and grandfather. They all lived in graves, Dad told me.

The graveyard was about three hours of train riding from Shanghai, and we went to see the buried twice a year. The first time was in April when willows began to sprout and wild narcissuses were in full blossom. The second was in September when the wind began to whistle and farmers began to harvest their crops. In both spring and fall, we saw buffaloes in the fields, busy with ploughing or dragging carts filled with grain.

Train riding in those days was not always pleasant. For all its noise, dust and unsteadiness, the train could not go faster than a horse. Dust came in through the cracks of the window panes and sneaked into our eyes; the smoke from the locomotive often formed a curtain over the window that made it difficult to see outside. Going along the same route twice a year, I remembered every tree and every house on both sides of the railroad. But they never bored me.

two hundred buffaloes in one trip if we started counting them after the train passed that white chimney next to the zoo. As soon as the train stopped, John and I would climb out the window and tell each other how many buffaloes we got and then we would begin adding our new buffaloes to the old score, the number of buffaloes each of us got during the previous trips. John could finish his work on our way to the graveyard, but I, except once, had to do most of my adding while they prayed to the buried.

Twice a year like that and a few years passed. I was ready to go to school. The first class was arithmetic. After reporting ourselves to the teacher, we were all told to count from one to a hundred. And I did it according to my understanding. But to my dismay, the teacher, who wore a pair

of glasses that seemed to be cut from the bottoms of two beer bottles, said I was wrong, that I missed many numbers from twenty up. My tears immediately told me that I was wrong. I stuttered to her that I always won in the buffalo counting game with my brother. But the teacher did not even understand the game. One week of hard work taught me how to count correctly and by the end of the first term I got the third best grade among all the grade one pupils.

Holidays followed school and the time came again for the family to see the buried again. We took the same train, rode along the same route with the same trees and houses outside. Farmers were as busy as they used to be with their buffaloes and John and I continued our game. And, for the first time, I lost.